THE

HISTORY

OF

ISAAC JENKINS,

AND

SARAH his WIFE,

AND THEIR

THREE CHILDREN.

BRISTOL,

PRINTED BY N. BIGGS,

1796.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

HISTORY

OF

ISAAC JENKINS.

IT was a terrible time, the latter end of the year 1783! Many a poor body will remember it as long as he lives; and I ſhall never forget it myſelf.—In the ſpring, the cold unkindly eaſt wind had ſhrivelled up the young corn, which ſeemed to ſhrink back, as if afraid of being touched by the blaſt. The fields looked all bald and ſallow, at the ſeaſon when they uſed to be ſo tufted and green! In ſummer the eaſt wind ceaſed, it is true; but what the better for that? for the rainy ſouth-weſt ſprung up; and the wet proved as hurtful in June and July, as the cold had been in April and May.—"Surely," ſaid the farmers, as they looked over their weeping and water-ſoaken grounds, "we "ſhall have a fine Auguſt and September to get in

" what harveſt there is. It has been cold in ſpring " and rainy all ſummer; but good weather muſt " come at laſt; it cannot blow and ſpit for ever." Alas! the farmers were miſtaken in their calculation: the bluſtering winds and the pelting ſhowers went on all autumn long, as freſh as they began at firſt in ſummer. The crops, light as they were, were half ſpoiled on the ground into the bargain. To make bad worſe, at ſeed-time there was no getting the corn into the earth in many parts, where the ſoil was ſtrong; for now the rain was harder and more conſtant than before; and it battered the wheat-lands, and made the clays as ſtiff as if they had been trodden on purpoſe to make bricks. What was to become of the poor, now their leaſing was all eaten and gone? It was bad already with them and a worſe look-out. By December corn came to be ten ſhillings a ſtrike. How could a labouring man maintain his family on ſix ſhillings a week, and, may be, leſs than that? God be thanked! there are kind charitable folks in the world; or elſe many an honeſt poor creature would have periſhed for want that winter! But thoſe charitable folks, as I was going to ſay, beſtirred themſelves in time, and went about the different pariſhes, making collections for the poor.——And nobody, that could afford it, was ſo hard-hearted as to deny giving ſomething; and in many pariſhes hundreds of pounds over and above the poors' rates were raiſed: and ſome was laid out in bread, and ſome in potatoes, to be diſtributed among thoſe that wanted, in the courſe of the winter.

Nevertheleſs, and notwithſtanding all this aſſiſtance, there came great ſickneſs over all the country, and numbers were ſwept away by the ſpotted fever, eſpecially among the poor. It went worſt with the little children, for they died, generally one, and ſometimes two or more, where there were ſix or ſeven in a family. And nothing was to be heard in the duſk of the evening, but the church bells tolling for funerals, unleſs it were the howling of the wind, or the hooting of the ſcreech-owl. It was melancholy muſic for a labouring man, as he walked home from his work acroſs the fields towards the fall of night!

In this hard time, you may needs think that ſome pariſhes would be worſe off than others. In ſome there was hardly any ſubſtantial perſon. All the farmers were little farmers, at rack-rent, hardly better in the world than their own workmen. It was as much as they could do to maintain their own families, and keep their cattle alive, for hay and ſtraw were ſcarce and dear as well as corn. Then how could they give away to others, when they were almoſt in want themſelves? It was not to be done; or they could only give away a little ſkimmed milk, or a meal's meat now and then to their next-door neighbour.

In one of theſe pariſhes, which lay at the foot of the Titterſtone Clee-Hill, there lived a poor labouring man, one Iſaac Jenkins by name. He had five young children, beſide one that had been killed by misfortune ſomewhat above two years before. If ever you went that way, you will remember his cottage.

It ſtands by itſelf, cloſe to the Ludlow road ſide as you come upon the Common at the bottom of the hill; and is juſt about two ſtones' throw beyond BIG MARTHA'S, as they call her, at the ſign of the *Horſe-Shoe*, where the waggons ſtop to bait, when they are lugging coal from Mr. Botfield's works to Ludlow and beyond.

Iſaac's wife had been ſick of the fever, and was juſt getting her ſtrength a little, but was ſtill very weak. Three of the five children had caught it from their mother; and the middlemoſt lay for dead.—If it had not been for his breathing, his mother would ſometimes have taken him for quite dead, and God knows there was but little life left in him. His eyes were dull, his face ſunk, and round about his lips was a foul cruſt of the colour of treacle. You could ſee when his mouth was a little way open, that his tongue was all brown and as rough as the bark of a tree; his breath alſo was very bad; and his body broke out all over dark-red ſpots. The child was a pitiful, aye, and a diſmal ſight to ſee. He aſked for nothing, and made no anſwer when he was ſpoken to, and took no notice of any thing around him; but kept moaning and picking the blanket moſt of the time, as if there had been feathers upon it. However, there was no feather on the blanket nor any ſuch thing; but the child knew not what he did. For why? becauſe his head was conſtantly roving and rambling by reaſon of the fever; it ran ſo high.

The mother would fain have ſent for the Doctor. But he lived at a diſtance, quite at Ludlow; and

ſhe could not pay him for his medicines, much leſs for his journey. 'Tis true, about a week before, a quack doctor had called and left ſome white powder, which did the mother and children no good, but harm. However, as they could only raiſe a few halfpence to pay him, he came no more: for your quack doctors care not a farthing whether they kill or cure; all they want is to fleece thoſe that know no better. I remember this man very well. I ſaw his own wife die of the fever under his hands; for all I could ſay, he would bleed her two or three times after ſhe had been ill a month or more! And the Rector of Wiſtanſtow aſſured me that about two out of three died of thoſe that he doctored, though he was a Conjurer beſide.

The day Iſaac's wife ſurely expected her ſickeſt child to die, Patty, the maid of the *Horse-Shoe*, juſt looked in to aſk, as ſhe ſaid, how they all did, but more for the ſake of telling the news. For as the Parſon of Hopton was out a cock-ſhooting, his gun-barrel had burſt in his hand and ſhattered his arm terribly, and he bled 'till he fainted, and "it is "thought" ſaid the girl, "he'll be dead directly." By and by, Sarah ſaw Mr. Langford, the ſurgeon from Ludlow, come galloping along with his horſe's head all white with foam and his belly all ſplaſhed with mire. Not long afterwards as ſhe was ruefully looking upon the children, and eſpecially upon him that was worſt, ſore grieved that ſhe could lend them no help, a thought came into her head.—Thinks ſhe, "I have heard ſay that Mr. Langford

" is a fair-ſpoken gentleman, and has done many
" a good turn to poor folks, and perhaps as he comes
" back, he'll not be quite in ſuch an hurry.
" So I'll make bold to ſpeak to him, and aſk him to
" look at this poor baby and the two others; and
" perhaps he can tell ſomething that will do them
" ſervice; and keep one or two of them alive,
" that I may not loſe all at once; and, may
" be, he'll truſt me till better times; and then
" I'll pay him for his trouble, as faſt as I can,
" truly and honeſtly."——This thought afforded her ſome relief for the preſent; for the poor creature was almoſt heart-broken to ſee her children, ſome dying and the reſt half famiſhed around her, and herſelf not able to do the leaſt thing for them. So ſhe ſet herſelf to hearken carefully, and whenever ſhe heard the tread of an horſe, along the road to Hopton, long before Mr. Langford could have come back, if he had been mounted upon a race-horſe at full ſpeed, out ſhe bolted her head from the door and looked wiſtfully towards the hill. At laſt—but it ſeemed a weary while firſt—ſhe eſpied Mr. Langford ſure enough, trotting homewards with a man after him. When ſhe had ſtopped him, ſhe ſtammered and faultered and could make but a poor ſtory of it; however ſhe ſaid enough for him to gueſs the reſt; ſo he alighted from his horſe and walked into the houſe. The houſe was as cold and open as a barn; the plaiſter was fallen by patches from the walls; you could ſee through the bare wicker-work, and the wind whiſtled in at the chinks in the door. The floor was damp, dirty and ill-ſmelling withal. But neither

this nor the miſerable plight in which the three children lay ſide by ſide, hindered Mr. Langford for a moment from carefully examining into the nature of their complaint. When he had done this, the mother began, ſobbing all the time, to proteſt that ſhe would thankfully, with the help of God, ſome time pay him his full demand, if ſhe were even to earn the money by going herſelf and working in the coal-pits on the Hill; but Mr. Langford ſtopped her ſhort, ſaying he would ſettle that matter when the children ſhould be well.—He added that the Parſon's man, who was going with him for medicines for his maſter, ſhould leave her, as he paſſed by, ſomething for the children and herſelf to take. "What you have to do is to beg "ſome wine, if the neighbourhood will afford any; if "not, buy ſome ale and warm it, and ſcrape a little "ginger and put a bit or two of ſugar into it, and "give the children a ſup now and then in a ſpoon."— "The Lord in heaven bleſs you, Sir," cried Sarah, "and return it to you twenty fold—ah! how happy "ſhould I be, if I had but a ſmall matter of what "Iſaac has ſpent in making himſelf ſick and ill-"humoured, to lay out now to hinder theſe poor "innocents from periſhing. But it ſhall go hard if I "do not get the one or the other, though I have no "money to lay out for either, for the two ſhillings I "had from the overſeer are every farthing gone."— This laſt ſhe muttered to herſelf, while a tear trickled down her cheek. Mr. Langford did not perfectly hear her, though he catched ſomething about Iſaac ſpending his money. As this was nothing to the preſent purpoſe, and he was afraid leſt ſhe ſhould fall to

bleſſing him and praying for him again in the warmth of her thankfulneſs, he went away with a promiſe to look at the children again as ſoon as it ſhould be neceſſary, for he ſhould often go that road. In ſpite of the remains of her diſorder, the mother all at once felt lighter and ſtronger. Grief, it is true, lay heavy enough on her heart ſtill, but not ſo heavy as before, and ſhe was leſs inclined to droop and pine.—Inſtead of ſitting down in deſpair, with an elbow on each knee and her face hid in her hands, now and then letting fall a tear, and as ſhe wiped it from her cheek, caſting a ſorrowful look at the children on the bed, ſhe took her black crock and rinſed it briſkly at the ſpout of water, that falls into the road cloſe by the garden hedge. When ſhe had waſhed it clean, the next thing was to think how ſhe could get a little ale into it: for of wine there was no chance. No body likely to give wine away, lived near; and ſhe could neither leave the children, nor if ſhe could, was ſhe able to walk any diſtance. There was plenty of ale at the *Horſe-Shoe*, but ſhe was afraid of the fat landlady, who was proud and given to ſcold bitterly; and ſhe apprehended beſides that Iſaac owed her money. However, it was her only chance; and ſo ſhe ventured to make for the *Horſe-Shoe*.—My Landlady was before the door, ſquabbling with a waggoner about ſome Birmingham half-pence, which he had paid her and would not change. The poor woman ſtood modeſtly by, till the wrangling was over and my landlady ſeemed pacified. Then, ſtill keeping her diſtance, ſhe dropped a ſhort curtſey, and "Doctor Langford," ſays ſhe, "ordered me to get ſome wine or ale to warm

" for the children, for if they had not ſomething good,
" the phyſic would be of no ſervice to them and it was
" odds but they died; and, Mrs. Pritchard, if you'll
" truſt me this once for a pint of your ale—I ſhould
" not aſk it for myſelf; indeed I ſhould not, Madam—
" and the very firſt money"—" So, believe me," ſaid
" the landlady, ſtopping her ſhort before ſhe had
" finiſhed, " here's impudence for you; what! I am
" to truſt all the world, and ſupport every ſlattern's
" dirty brats, I ſuppoſe. Gracious me! Truſt! yes,
" to be ſure, one may truſt beggars till one has loſt
" all credit one's ſelf. Go, Huſſey, look behind that
" kitchen door, at your drunkard huſband's ſcore;
" and ſee there if I ought to truſt for more.——No,
" ſtop, you ſhan't go into the houſe neither; ſo, get
" away about your buſineſs and dòn't attempt to bring
" your filthy vermin diſtempers into creditable houſes,
" among people who are well to paſs in the world,
" forſooth!" On hearing this, the poor woman felt as if her breath was ſtopped all of a ſudden: ſhe grew pale and put forth her arms from her ſides, as if to ſave herſelf from dropping. She then turned away, and ſlowly tottered towards her own houſe, for ſhe could really ſcarce keep upon her legs. Mrs. Prichard finding that her petitioner returned not a word to her abuſe, and perceiving how faint and poorly ſhe really was, felt her mind ſo becalmed all at once that ſhe wondered herſelf which way her paſſion was flown. She was not particularly ill-natured, though vaſtly fond of hearing her foul tongue wag. " Hark you, Sarah," ſays ſhe, calling after her in a ſoftened voice; " if ſo be, 'tis as you
" ſay, and the Doctor ordered you to get the ale for

" the ſick children, why that's quite another ſtory. " Iſaac's is a long ſcore, to be ſure, and I have loſt, I " may ſay, many's the good pound, by my tender- " heartedneſs; for I was always too yielding and " kind, I could never ſay nay to an old cuſtomer, " when he was diſguiſed in liquor, and coaxed me ſo " lovingly to fetch t'other mug.—But if it be to make " helpleſs children well, lack-a-day for 'em, poor " urchins! I'll let you have the pint. So, look up, " and have a good heart. And marry, if need be of " another pint to morrow, and the next day, and the " next, why come and fetch it and welcome. And " I'll give you a ſlice of white bread into the bargain, " if it will do any good. For the Lord reward me! I " defy this ſlanderous world to ſay that Martha Pritch- " ard ever wanted the bowels of condeſcenſion towards " her poor neighbours, ragged and dirty though they " be; that is, underſtand me, when they demean " themſelves properly. And now I bethink me, Sarah, " you always ſtood back when we were at the church- " door together, to let me walk out firſt; and when we " meet in the Lane, don't you ſtop ſhort, and look " down upon the ground, and make a curtſey and ſay " *Your Servant, Mrs. Pritchard.*" " And Sarah! when " did I fail to make anſwer; *So Sarah! how be you, " Sarah!* for I always loved to be lowly and humble " in ſpirit. So wait there a bit, and I'll bring you the " drink directly."

This change of tone in Mrs. Pritchard was as reviving as a cordial to the dejected Sarah. She thanked her and told her that as to the white bread the children were not in a condition to eat any thing; but the

Doctor ordered her to ſcrape a little ginger into the ale.—" Then a race of ginger you ſhall have, a 'name " of God, and if you had wanted to the value of half a " nutmeg, it ſhould not have been denied you."

So ſaying, Mrs. Pritchard marched into the houſe, holding up her head, in perfect good-humour at the thought of her own conſequence and chriſtian charity. She was not long before ſhe brought out a pint of ale with a race of ginger for the children, and a glaſs of warm elder wine with a bit of toaſted bread for their mother.

The two children who were not ſo dangerouſly ill, now ſoon got better, thanks to Mr. Langford's medicines and Mrs. Pritchard's gingered ale! But it went hard with the other; he lay moaning and ſenſeleſs for ſeveral days; and it was difficult to get a ſpoonful down his throat. However his mother did not give up trying for all that. And at length ſhe got the knack of making him ſwallow out of a ſmall tea pot, which Mr. Langford deſired her to borrow of Mrs. Pritchard. By degrees the lad ſhewed ſigns of life, and in a week or nine days the Doctor told her he would certainly recover. Sarah herſelf gained ſtrength every day. And Mrs. Pritchard who gave her own ale and ginger the credit of the cure, would not let it drop through for want of a mug and a race extraordinary.

One evening, when the danger was all over, Mr. Langford called to ſee them for the laſt time. He was a ſenſible as well as a charitable man; and he had long perceived a good deal amiſs in and about the houſe, beſides the ſickneſs. The garden, where there ſeemed to have been more weeds than potatoes,

beſpoke a bad fault ſomewhere. And the condition of the houſe likewiſe ſhewed how much Iſaac was poverty ſtruck; beſides a crazy table, a broken arm chair, a bench and two ſtools, the furniture conſiſted principally of an old pot, ſome porringers without handles, a few cracked trenchers, two or three pewter ſpoons battered and beat in at the ſides, and a worm-eaten ſpinning-wheel. Above ſtairs, there was nothing but a bed half ſtuffed with chaff, and on the floor beſide the bed, a wad of ſtraw for the children to lie on. This made Mr. Langford ſtrongly ſuſpect Iſaac not to be ſo good to his family as he ought to be; for though ſhe muſt be a naughty woman indeed, who would not ſtrive all ſhe could for her own ſmall children, when they were ſick and likely to die, yet he thought Sarah was uncommonly anxious and attentive; and that ſhe had managed better to nurſe them and cook their ale than many a poor woman might have done. And when he recollected what ſhe had dropped, and he had imperfectly heard, the firſt time he called, he had little doubt but Iſaac was one of thoſe unfeeling, ſottiſh fathers, who ſpend a great part of their wages at the alehouſe, and leave their families to pine and famiſh at home, ſeemingly not caring whether they have a morſel of bread to eat or not.—"And if "ſo," thought he to himſelf, "I have done theſe poor "creatures little ſervice at laſt! Whenever the fever "comes acroſs the country again, as ſure as can be, it "will ſeize upon them among the firſt, weak and "ſtarvelings as they will be for want of enough to eat. "And then ten to one but they periſh, for I may not "chance to ride by in time! Nay, if no diſtemper

" ſhould come, better have died now, than linger on " in conſtant miſery and hunger.——However, Iſaac " will not be long before he comes from work, and I " will try what a little talk will do at leaſt. So lately " as he has ſeen them at death's door, if he have the " heart of a man and not of a brute, he'll think better " hereafter.

In order to make ſure of his ground, he put ſome queſtions to Sarah; and ſoon diſcovered that his ſurmiſes were but too well founded. Iſaac was indeed a good deal to be pitied as well as blamed. He was not bad at bottom. When in ſervice, he was ſober, and thoughtful, and ſaving. And for ſeveral years after his marriage he continued to behave himſelf ſoberly, taking great pleaſure in ſeeing the houſe clean, and the children well fed. He killed a pig every year, and brewed ſome beer at the Wake and Chriſtmas. His houſe was clean and the children ruddy and plump; always contented and playful and friſking about; not dirty, pale, and pot-bellied, as if they had the worms; and ſhivering at every blaſt and without any life or ſpirit. But the misfortune of the eldeſt boy, who was juſt big enough to go about with his father after the horſes and ſo had come to be his conſtant companion, was the beginning of Iſaac's change for the worſe. One fifth of November, as he was coming down the hill towards night with three horſes and an empty cart, ſome collier boys let off a cracker, and it bounced till it came into the road, and the horſes took fright, and ſet off like mad down the hill; and the lad, whom Iſaac had lifted upon the fore horſe becauſe he was tired of walking, was very ſoon thrown down head-

long; and the horſes ran and dragged the wheel over his body. It was in vain that Iſaac hurried and bawled after the horſes. The child was trod and cruſhed under foot before he could come up; and all he could do was to carry him home, bleeding and mangled, with his face all one wound. And he actually died the next day, after ſuffering terrible pain. The Doctor could do nothing for him. For Iſaac could then afford to ſend for a Doctor when any of his family were ſick, as he had contrived to ſave a pretty ſpill at ſervice.

As ſoon as Iſaac ſaw with his own eyes and heard from the Doctor the ſad condition of the child, he hied him to the hill in a terrible rage, determined on revenge. The collier lads had however got ſafe into the pits, and he could not find any traces of them.

This melancholy accident made Iſaac bethink himſelf of the many limbs broken and lives deſtroyed by frightening horſes on this day. He now felt compaſſion for the ſufferers and their fathers and mothers. And although wanton boys may think it fine ſport to make a flaſh or a burſt after it is dark, yet conſidering what ſhocking miſchief they often do, they ought to be made to leave off theſe dangerous tricks, if they do not chooſe to leave them off of their own accord.

Iſaac's anger, as he returned home, melted down into ſorrow. He wept bitterly over the boy, who was dying in agonies of pain. After his death, he could not hold up his head for the firſt week; and when he returned to his maſter, he cared not whether he worked or eat. As he was one day coming home quite melancholy, two young men, who

were ſtanding at Martha's door, perſuaded him to drink a draught out of their jug, and then to come into the *Horse-Shoe*, where they lodged. Theſe were Londoners. They had come down to ſaw the hollies of the Hill into thin boards for fineering. They were jolly companions, got great wages, and ſpent them as merrily as they came. Iſaac found relief in the effect of the ale, and the wonderful ſtories he was told about London. He promiſed to call again next night. They ſoon became loving friends; and the oftener Iſaac went to the *Horse-Shoe*, the harder he found it to ſtay away. He ſoon came to ſuch a paſs as never to feel eaſy but when he was beſotted. Little by little, you know, is the way which men always fall into evil practices. Though the Londoners went off by the end of the month, Iſaac had ſo thoroughly learned the trade of a toper, and loved it ſo dearly, that he would follow it Saint Monday, Saint Tueſday and Wedneſday beſides, though he had none to help him. Hence his money ſoon went, his credit followed after; and at length Martha never put a pint into his hand without throwing his ſcore in his teeth. You have already heard how hard it came to fare with the wife and children at home.

Soon after Mr. Langford had gained this intelligence, Iſaac returned from the labour of the day. He had never met with Mr. Langford before, becauſe that gentleman had never before called at ſo late an hour; but he knew him well, having often ſeen him at Ludlow, as well as upon his rides about the country. You may be ſure Iſaac was not wanting in thankful expreſſions. And to do him juſtice, he

felt as he ſpoke. He would have been heartily grieved if his wife had died, though he had ſo neglected her, and treated her ſo unkindly; and as to the children, he muſt have been an unnatural monſter indeed, if he had not ſincerely rejoiced in their recovery. At laſt, he ſaid, "I hope, now you have been ſo kind and "charitable, Sir, as to help them over this bad bout, "they will make hearty, honeſt men, able to get their "bread without thieving and ſtealing, or being be-"holden to any man. And if it ſhould ever be in their "power, God ſhield them! to make any return for "the favour, if they ſcruple to do it, the dogs will "deſerve to come to as bad an end as their poor "brother, Neddy, Chriſt in mercy receive his ſoul!"

Mr. Langford. If they do not prove hearty, honeſt, able men, it will not be *their* fault at leaſt, I dare ſay, Iſaac.

Iſaac. Then it ſhall be no fault of mine, Maſter; and Sarah, I'll anſwer for her, will ſtrive her beſt to rear them.

Mr. Langford. May be ſo, Iſaac, for what I know; but both you and I have learned before to-day, that ſaying and doing are two things.

Iſaac. (*Reddening and feeling a little uneaſy.*) I hope, Doctor, you don't think I'd be guilty of any thing to harm or wrong poor helpleſs infants. No, I'd ſhed my heart's blood firſt.

Mr. Langford. No, not knowingly, Iſaac, you would not injure them on purpoſe and from malice aforethought. You would not, for inſtance, beat out their brains againſt the floor; nor would you take the poker and break their bones. Nay, I dare believe,

if any man ſhould attempt to do them damage, you would riſque your own life to ſave theirs, even though he were a ſtouter man than yourſelf, or though two men at once were to ſet upon them.

Sarah. (Eagerly,) Yes, Sir, I'll be bound for him. He's as fond of the poor things as he needs to be, and he moaned ſadly about Neddy, I thought it would have broke his heart.

Mr. Langford. So much the better. I am glad to hear it. I've the higher opinion of Iſaac. But what's the reaſon then I ſee them in ſuch plight? The poor children, I vow, have hardly a rag to their backs, and that miſerable tatter of a blanket will never keep the cold from them at nights, this winter time! And here theſe two that have not been ill—they look half famiſhed to death, the very picture of miſery; and the houſe is in ſhocking repair, and the garden over-run with weeds. And, Sarah, when I called firſt, you had hardly a morſel in the houſe, nor any money, I verily believe, to lay out for any thing. Have died they would for pure want, if I had not by good luck paſſed this way! I don't know at whoſe door the ſin of their death would have lain——

Here Sarah turned away her head and ſighed; Iſaac was mute, and ſeemed not to know what to do with his eyes and hands. Mr. Langford pauſed and looked at him, as if in expectation of an anſwer. At laſt when he made none, he continued:

"Yes, yes, I know very well how it fares with the woman and children, when the huſband frequents the alehouſe. I have ſeen their melancholy caſe but

too often. And Iſaac, to be plain with him, begins to have the look of a ſot."

At this Iſaac, who had nothing to ſay for himſelf, and felt his conſcience ſmite him, thought fit to be affronted, as if that would excuſe him to God and his own heart. So, not having ſenſe to ſee that what Mr. Langford was ſaying was for his own good as well as his family's, and forgetting how much he was obliged to that good gentleman, he knitted his brows and ſullenly replied,

"What's that to any body, I wonder? A man's own is his own I ſay, to do with it what ſeemeth him good; marry! it would be fine indeed if an hard-working body could not have a ſup of drink to comfort him, becauſe a body happens to be a poor body.—There's Maſter Simcox, yonder, by the ſide of the hill; he takes his fill every day, Sundays and all; he never goes ſober to bed. Why don't people ſermonize him, and take him to taſk.

Mr. Langford. He is taken to taſk pretty ſeverely, I can aſſure you, Iſaac. His legs are beginning to ſwell, and he has burned his inſide ſo that he has not a ſound ſpot about him, he's worſe than a rotten ſheep. He may linger on awhile, but he'll ſcarce have a comfortable hour again; he'll die by inches, and, poor, miſtaken man, he had a conſtitution that might have held to an hundred. But now his breath will be drowned out of his body. He's on the ſtool of repentance, but repentance is come too late to ſerve him.—But Mr. Iſaac, you ſeem to be huffed; do you think I mean you any harm? if ſo, good night, fare you well."

And

And he walked towards the door. Iſaac's heart relented at the ſound of the latch, as Mr. Langford lifted it up to go out. His feelings told him how ſcandalous and ſhameful it would be to let his benefactor go away ſo, when nobody but himſelf was to blame. So, going towards the door, "Nay Sir," ſaid he, "pleaſe not to leave a body with an ill thought in your head, as if one was unthankful. Heaven knows, I'd pay you honourably, if I was able, and pray for you beſides I ſhall evermore. Harm! I do not believe you could ever do any body harm. You have done us too much good.—But when you ſaid that if any of thoſe poor harmleſs babies had died, the ſin would have lain at ſomebody's door, and looked at me as if you meant at mine! the thought pierced me to the heart, as if it had been a drawn ſword.

Mr. Langford let fall the latch and returned. Sarah, who had caſt a ſorrowful eye towards her friend as he walked away, eagerly reached the bench when ſhe ſaw him return, and wiping it with her apron, looked him in the face without ſaying a word; but Mr. Langford eaſily read the meaning of Sarah's look, and he ſat down. Then addreſſing himſelf to Iſaac, "indeed," ſays he "Iſaac, I pity you much more than I blame you; and I was not ſorry to ſee that what I ſaid touched you to the quick. Perhaps you were once a ſober, induſtrious man, a kind huſband and father, and have not always lived in the habit of drunkenneſs; but I cannot conceal the truth; and if inſtead of bringing home your wages, you have actually been accuſtomed to ſpend a good part of them at the alehouſe, your

family muſt have been pinched; and of this I am afraid I ſee too many appearances in and about the houſe. In this caſe, knowing what I know, I ſhould have imputed the death of any of your family more to the miſery you have brought upon them, than to the diſtemper; for it always takes faſteſt hold of the weak and puny; and ſo I would ſay, if I were to ſpeak upon oath, before a judge and jury.

Iſaac. (Looking ſtedfaſtly at Mr. Langford to ſee if he was in earneſt, in a tone of great humility and half frightened) marry! Heaven forbid. I hope you don't ſpeak in ſober ſadneſs. Lord be merciful to me a ſinner! If Death had come, and you had told me this, I ſhould have gone diſtracted.

Mr. Langford. (Laying down his hat and whip) Come Iſaac, ſit you down; the worſt is paſt: I hope it will come no more. I think I can eaſily make you feel and acknowledge the truth of what I ſay, though you are no doctor.

Iſaac. I be no doctor to be ſure, nor yet a farrier; but for all that, I know how to bleed a horſe in the fall of the year. I learned this when I was waggoner to 'Squire Knight.

Mr. Langford. (Smiling, and then looking grave again) I am glad to hear you are ſo ſkilful, Iſaac; the more you know of horſes and cattle and ſheep, the more likely we ſhall be to agree in our opinion, and the fewer words need I uſe to explain myſelf. Now then tell me, ſuppoſe there were to be a hard winter, which would ſtand it beſt, cattle well foddered and tended, or ſuch as ſhould be left to provide for themſelves on the hill?

Iſaac. Oh! to be ſure, thoſe that had plenty of burdens of good hay and ſtraw. The others would be as rough as bears, and their belly would be tucked up quite cloſe to the back bone; and ten to one but they periſhed with cold and hunger. Why for the matter of that, only look at my old maſter 'Squire Knight's team; the horſes are all as ſleek as a mole, and as ſtrong, they could draw two tons each. But Thomas Shelton's kephels are ſo thin and weak, they can hardly lift one leg after the other; this is becauſe he turns them out after work to ſour graſs, well nigh too ſhort for a ſheep to bite, all winter long; and hardly ever gives them a meal of dry meat. 'Ifaith it is eaſy to know by their looks when cattle have enough to eat, and when they are ſtinted.

Mr. Langford. What you ſay is very juſt; they look ſo forlorn and dull and diſconſolate when they are all ſkin and bone. But tell me, which ſtand cold and hardſhip beſt, colts and calves, or horſes and oxen?

Iſaac. Oh! oxen and horſes, all to nothing; aye, for a ſingle full-grown cow or ox, half a dozen calves and yearlings, I'd wager, are loſt in a caſualty time; and the ſame of lambs and young chickens and turkeys: all young things have precarious lives, as 'Squire Knight uſed to ſay.

Mr. Langford. Aye, and ſo have young children too, I can aſſure you, Iſaac, as precarious as young turkeys; what multitudes, alas! have I ſeen cut off before they were two years old.

Iſaac. "It ſtands to reaſon that they ſhould be a power tenderer."—And he caſt a look at his own chil-

dren, of whom the three eldeſt had got cloſe to him and Mr. Langford, while Sarah nurſed the youngeſt and held the next by the hand, liſtening very attentively to what fell from Mr. Langford.

Mr. Langford. I ſuppoſe now, Iſaac, you have known many farmers loſe their young cattle for want of tending them and giving them plenty of fodder, eſpecially in theſe hard times.

Iſaac. Aye, that I have often and over. Why there's Thomas Shelton that I mentioned juſt now; what makes him ſo low in the world, but becauſe he cannot find in his heart to hearten his yearlings with a little hay in the froſt, or give a drooping beaſt a feed of oats? So the neighbours all ſay of him, *Thomas Shelton muſt needs grow rich, for he ſaves the fodder and loſes the beaſt.* Many a time as I have gone by his ground with a burden of ſtraw to my maſter Simcox's bullocks, Shelton's kine have come to the gate in the lane, and hung their heads over and lowed ſo, 'twas pitiful to hear them. For all they were dumb creatures, I knew their meaning, as well as if they had ſaid, "give us a mouthful of dry food, for we have "more ſnow than graſs to eat, and our bellies are "aching with hunger and cold." "No," ſays I, "poor moggies, I cannot do that neither, or elſe our "own cattle will catch the belly-ach; but I wiſh with "all my heart Shelton was never to ſup a ſpoonful of "hot porridge, or dip his knife into a diſh of liquored "potatoes, till he has foddered you well."

Mr. Langford. And don't you think your own children have been, many a diſconſolate winter's day, as badly off as Shelton's yearlings? Or do you ſuppoſe

children not to get the belly-ach from hunger and cold as well as cattle? Or that they are better able to ſtand hardſhips? Muſt not weakneſs bring diſorders upon us as well as upon cattle, and make us more liable to fall a prey to any diſtemper that happens to ſeize us? Iſaac, Iſaac, why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Have not the neighbours a right to ſay worſe of thee than of Shelton? as for inſtance, *Thomas Shelton ſtarves his yearlings, but Iſaac Jenkins ſtarves his own children. Then if Thomas Shelton is bad, what muſt Iſaac Jenkins be?* Or does Iſaac think it a leſs ſin or a leſs crying ſhame, to make children miſerable than dumb creatures? He was moved by compaſſion to wiſh that Shelton might never have a comfortable meal more, till he had ſatisfied his cattle that lowed ſo mournfully over the gate; in like manner, have I not a right, when I ſee Iſaac's children pinched by the cold for want of clothes to cover their nakedneſs, and ravenous with hunger ſo that they would jump at a mouldy cruſt, have I not, I ſay, a right to wiſh that every drop of ale that goes over his lips when he is guzzling at the *Horse-Shoe*, may ſet his teeth on edge, taſte like verjuice to his tongue, and gripe his ſtomach, till he rolls on the ground, and writhes like an horſe that has the belly-ach?"

Iſaac had talked glibly about cattle and horſes and ſheep, partly to give Mr. Langford a good opinion of his knowledge, and partly, I believe, in hopes of putting the thought of his being a ſot out of Mr. Langford's head. But when he ſaw every thing he had mentioned turned in this manner againſt him,

and heard himſelf condemned out of his own mouth, he was quite ſtaggered; and ſo overpowered that he had no reply to make. Mr. Langford, as he finiſhed ſpeaking, ſteadily fixed his eyes upon Iſaac's; and Sarah and the children without knowing why, did the ſame. The dead ſilence that followed, and all their looks being upon him, together with what he had juſt heard, quite confounded Iſaac, and he would almoſt have been glad if the Hill had covered him. After a ſhort pauſe, the eldeſt lad turned his head ſuddenly towards his mother and enquired very earneſtly; "Mammy, Mammy, what's the matter with "Daddy? he looks for all the world as Stephy uſed "to do when we had had no bread nor 'tatoes to day." Then ſeeming to conſider for a moment, he ran to the hearth where Sarah had ſet down a crock of potatoes and ſkimmed milk which ſhe was cooking when Mr. Langford came in. He ſnatched up the meſs, ran with it to Iſaac, and offering him a ſpoonful cried, "here, Daddy, eat a mouthful, do now, and donno' "be ſick." This was too much; Iſaac haſtily puſhed back the child's hand, jumped up from his ſeat, walked acroſs the floor, folded his arms over the ſill of the window, and laid down his forehead upon them, without ſaying a word. Mr. Langford made a ſign to Sarah and the children to huſh and ſit ſtill. Then taking out his watch he held the chain and ſeals for the children to admire, preventing them all the while from making a noiſe.

When he thought Iſaac had pondered ſo long upon what he had heard, as not to be likely ſoon to forget it, he went on, Iſaac ſtill leaning upon the window-

ſill; "A blind man may ſee that the right way to make children wicked is to uſe them ill and to famiſh them. Nay, this is the way in which children come to do wicked things before they have a notion what wickedneſs is. In the firſt place, what is it that is ſure to make children or grown perſons ſour-tempered? why, to be always in pain and ſuffering; and is not a child that has ſeldom his belly full, almoſt conſtantly in pain? does not he feel an ugly gnawing within; and get ſnarliſh, fretful and ill-reliſhed? Such a child has no pleaſure in himſelf, and he can like nobody elſe; for nobody does him any good, and what makes children love their parents, but their being good to them?—Then again—don't be affronted, Sarah, as Iſaac was, I mean your children no diſparagement—would you ſooneſt truſt a dog that is well fed, or one that is as gaunt as a wolf? do not dogs, that are only ſkin and bone, prowl about every where, and ranſack other folks' houſes, and ſeize upon every thing they can get at? I have known ſuch dogs many a time tear a joint of meat from the ſpit. And a child, raving as it were, with hunger, depend upon it, will contract the ſame thieviſh diſpoſition, though, poor thing, he knows no more than the dog what a ſin it is to ſteal. Having been driven by rage of appetite to ſnatch at any eatable that falls in his way, he will afterwards eaſily be tempted to lay his hands upon whatever elſe he can carry off, to whomſoever it may belong. You ſaid, Iſaac, that you hoped theſe lads would come to earn their bread honeſtly without thieving or ſtealing. But whether he thinks about it or not, every man that keeps his children in miſery, moſt certainly does his

beſt to breed them for the gallows; and this is a pretty thought for a father to carry about with him! One would think it muſt damp his ſpirits in ſpite of all the ale in Mrs. Pritchard's cellar."—Here Iſaac fetched a deep groan and raiſed up his head, and Sarah, whoſe eyes were fixed on Mr. Langford, lifted them up, and opening her eyelids as wide aſunder as they would go, fervently whiſpered "*Mercy forbid.*" ——Mr. Langford proceeded.

"Every parent, to be ſure, as I ſaid, (a poor man as much as a rich) wiſhes his children to do well; now when they are big enough to go out in the world, people are fond of taking thoſe that have had honeſt, ſober, and induſtrious fathers and mothers; and every body muſt ſee *that for a parent to bear a fair character is as good as a portion to a child.*—But who will have any thing to do with boys or girls that have been kept ragged and dirty and idle, and mayhap have become thieviſh, becauſe they had the misfortune to have naughty fathers and mothers? Why, people will be afraid to take them into their houſes; or if they happen to hire them, becauſe they are in diſtreſs for a ſervant, they will ſtill look upon them with an evil eye.—Ah, believe me, there would be little wickedneſs in the world, if there were no diſtreſs.—Vice almoſt always begins among the poor from miſery, as among the rich from idleneſs.

"And how cowardly it is beſides, to tyrannize over thoſe that can make no reſiſtance! If a grown perſon were to ſet upon a child to fight him, he would be hooted out of the pariſh and never hear the laſt of it. And yet he would not do him perhaps half

the injury, by a little bruiſing and giving him a bloody noſe, as if he was to rob him of half his meat every day. And where's the difference, tell me, between a man tearing the bread out of his children's hands, and ſpending the money that ſhould go to buy them bread at an alehouſe?—I ſee none in the world for my part.—Suppoſe, Iſaac, you felt any day a longing deſire for ſome ale, and had no money in your pocket, but came into the houſe juſt as Sarah had taken the laſt loaf out of the cupboard, and with the knife in her hand was going to divide it among the children; and the little ones had crouded round her all hungry and eager, and each lifting up his hands for his ſhare, could you find in your heart to ſnatch the loaf and carry it to the *Horſe-Shoe* to change it for ale, diſappointing all the houſe of their meal and leaving them to ſtarve?—I know you could not—Then conſider well and try if you can find any difference between the barbarity of ſelling your bread for ale, and ſpending your wages in ale before they are turned into bread.

" There's another matter too that I muſt not forget, ſince we are talking upon the ſubject. Do you think Sarah here would ever have conſented to have you, if ſhe could poſſibly have foreſeen the miſery your unfortunate turn was to bring upon her children? for I do not ſuppoſe that ſhe reproaches you much in her mind with her own ſufferings; and yet Heaven knows they been ſevere enough—Is not a man who turns out ſo deceitful, a liar as well as a coward; nay worſe than a liar, for he is downright perjured and forſworn: If you were to go to the aſſizes

and bear falſe witneſs ſo as to bring ſome loſs or penalty upon your neighbour, you would yourſelf be put into the pillory: and you would deſerve the puniſhment. Then tell me, is there any thing worſe in breaking oaths taken at the aſſizes, than promiſes made of your own accord, and afterwards repeated before God and man, in as ſolemn a manner as ever oath was taken. Will you ſay that there's no law againſt breaking the promiſes you made out of church, and in church to Sarah? Suppoſe there was no law againſt murder, or you were ſure to eſcape detection, would you think it no crime to kill me and rob me of my watch and what money I have about me.—You have heard, *Do unto others as you would that others ſhould do unto you*—So pray, change places with Sarah, and conſider within yourſelf whether you would have a right or not to complain, if ſhe had gone on as you have—Men (and women too) when they have no reſtraint upon their will, often make a bad uſe of their power; and of all the tyrannies under the ſun, I believe the tyranny of ſome huſbands (rich as well as poor) to be the moſt cruel. I know a country where they have lately made a law againſt ſuch family tyrants; and I wiſh we had ſuch a law in our country; for I ſee no reaſon why one wicked or one fooliſh man ſhould have it in his power to trample upon the peace of a whole family, and make them paſs their days in ſorrow. Let there be always, ſay I, a way of making thoſe do right who do not chooſe to do ſo of their own accord; and let no vicious or obſtinate perſon pretend to ſet up his will and humour in the place of reaſon, and think to

practiſe his pranks at the expence of others: much leſs of thoſe whom he is in honour and duty bound to make as happy as it is in his power to make them. As to yourſelf, you know beſt, Iſaac, whether you went out to your work and came back to your home moſt light-hearted formerly, when it was warm and comfortable and you had a flitch of bacon hanging up at the ceiling to cut a rather whenever you liked, or now, when it is, to ſay the truth, hardly fit to houſe a pig—You know this beſt, I ſay, and I leave you to compare notes with yourſelf on this head.—I wiſh with all my heart things could be ſo ordered that every poor family ſhould be comfortably clad and plentifully fed, and have beſides wherewithal to make decently merry at times; and I hope this may come to be the caſe. And ſo it may be in many a family at preſent, if the father did not ſo ſottiſhly waſte upon himſelf the wages he gets; and they were laid out for the ſupport and comfort of all. But labouring men muſt firſt learn the difference between beaſtlineſs and cheerfulneſs, and they muſt be diſpoſed to ſhare every farthing they can afford to ſpend, in making merry with their wives and children at home. Why, what would you think of one of your children, if I were to give him a great piece of apple-pye, and he ſhould refuſe to let any of the reſt taſte a bit? Yet, Iſaac, there is ſurely full as much greedineſs in your ſpending upon yourſelf what ſhould maintain the whole family; and which, pray, ought to be moſt conſiderate—a parent or his child?

"You

" You may have it in your head, perhaps, that if you ſhould poiſon yourſelf outright with drink, or come to be unable to work, *there's the pariſh*; *it is but coming to that at laſt for yourſelf or family, juſt as may happen.* Alas! pariſh allowance, believe me, (as you and yours have lately felt) is poor work—juſt enough to keep body and ſoul together. And what right has a perſon, who has taken no care for himſelf and his children, to expect that others ſhould be at the charge of ſupporting them in eaſe and plenty? God forbid, that thoſe who fall into diſtreſs without any fault of their own, ſhould be left to periſh for want of help! But if none but ſuch came to be troubleſome to pariſhes, they would be much better done by, and all their neighbours, that could afford it, would be ſending them ſomething good. But now the poors' rates run ſo high, from the fault of many among the poor themſelves, and people are obliged to pay ſo much, that they have, many of them, nothing left to give. So you ſee how ſuch, as wilfully bring themſelves upon the pariſh, are rogues to thoſe that God Almighty brings; and hinder perſons who have always behaved themſelves induſtriouſly and ſoberly, from being ſo well treated as they otherwiſe would, when diſtreſs befalls them!"

Here Mr. Langford finiſhed his remonſtrance to Iſaac upon the folly and criminality of ſpending his wages at the alehouſe. He roſe and ſlipped half-a-crown into Sarah's hand, which he thought would ſupply them with neceſſaries for the preſent, putting his finger upon his lips in token for ſilence. She had ſenſe to comprehend him and to hold her tongue, as

ſhe was bid. She therefore contented herſelf with putting on her moſt thankful look. He then ſaid, " Iſaac, go and lead my horſe into the road: he is " faſtened on the ſnug ſide of the houſe where there " is no wind. Make haſte, for I have been talking " here till I have overſtayed my time." He was mounted in a trice, and off on the trot, away towards Ludlow.

But I hope you can tell more about this family. What became of Sarah and the children? Did Iſaac take up and become kind? " Why, my good reader, what " would you have done in Iſaac's caſe?" *Oh, brought all my wages and given them to Sarah to lay out, and never any more have gone within the* Horſe-Shoe *door to drink, if I had lived to the age of Methuſalem; beſides, I'd have got ſome clay and plaiſtered the walls at nights to keep the cold out: for as good Mr. Langford ſaid, a man who ſpends his money upon his own belly, and leaves his family to ſtarve, is no better than a coward, a tyrant, and a brute; aye, and more than half forſworn into the bargain.*

" You are very right; it is too true: and I hope " every honeſt poor man who hears of Sarah's and the " children's danger and diſtreſs, will think as you do, " and act accordingly. I believe, for my part, that " the poor are well diſpoſed, and do wrong oftener " for want of knowing better, than from wickedneſs " of heart." *But I am afraid Iſaac's ſcore at the* Horſe-Shoe *would be a ſore thorn in his ſide, if he were ever ſo well inclined. It is a hard matter for a labouring body that has low wages to get himſelf out, when he is*

once over head and ears in debt. But how much was his ſcore in all, I pray ?" "I was afraid too that the "debt would lay him under difficulties; and like you "was anxious to learn whether Iſaac reformed, eſpe- "cially as I know what an hard matter it is to break "bad habits; I was alſo very ſorry for Sarah, for I "thought the firſt time I heard the above account, "that ſhe behaved well all the way through; and "when I enquired concerning her in that part of the "country, where I lately was, I found ſhe had borne "a good character all the time ſhe was in ſervice; and "that though ſhe did not when a girl fooliſhly lay "out her money in tawdry ribbands and frippery, ſhe "was always very tight and clean on a Sunday. If "you had ſeen her then, you would not have known "her again now; ſhe was ſo much altered by Iſaac's "unkindneſs. Accordingly, I wrote to Mr. Langford, "with whom I am well acquainted, for an account of "what followed; and he was ſo obliging as to inform "me by letter of the following particulars.—You ſhall "read them in his own words."

Letter from Mr. Langford to the perſon that draws up this account.

LUDLOW, *June* 3d, 1792.

My dear Friend,

Although it be now going on for ten years, ſince it happened, I ſtill diſtinctly remember my attendance on the wife and children of Iſaac Jenkins; and I ſhall, I can aſſure you, always remember it with ſatisfaction.——Soon after their recovery, I held a

long and earneſt converſation with Iſaac on the heinous practice of drunkenneſs in the father of a numerous family. To this converſation the late and preſent condition of his family was, I thought, likely, if any thing poſſibly could, to give effect; ſo I left him abruptly. Beſides the neceſſity I was under of ſo doing, I thought this a meaſure of good policy.——An attempt on my part to humble him by extorting a full confeſſion of his guilt, might only ſet him upon deviſing ſome excuſe or defence; and though he could have been brought to make the faireſt promiſes of amendment at the moment, he might have thought himſelf acquitted by a parcel of empty words, and not have altered his conduct at all. On this account I thought it beſt for himſelf and his family, that the matter ſhould remain in ſuſpenſe, that what he had ſeen and heard might have the chance of ſinking deeper into his mind. Though it ſhould prey upon his ſpirits awhile, I thought it would do no harm in the long run. In about two months afterwards my buſineſs carrying me that way again, I took the opportunity of calling at Iſaac's. He was not at home. But I was pleaſed to ſee things wearing a better aſpect. The houſe ſmelled ſweet and freſh, as I entered the door. The injunctions that I had laid upon Sarah reſpecting the cleanlineſs of the houſe and the place before the door, had been punctually complied with. The door itſelf was mended, clumſily indeed, but ſo as to keep out moſt of the wind—it was evidently Iſaac's handy-work.—The walls were coarſely plaiſtered anew, where they wanted.—The cloathes of the children were all patched indeed, but no longer

ragged, or full of holes.—Cheerfulneſs and content ſate upon the countenances of the three younger children. The two elder were gone with their father to the ſheep-waſhing.—After I had ſurveyed the improved condition of the houſe, Sarah opened the cupboard-door and handed down three-fourths of a good ſubſtantial loaf with a piece of pale-faced cheeſe of the country; and ſhe looked at me with a ſignificant ſmile, as much as to ſay, "times are mended "ſince you were here laſt: the fare may be coarſe, "but a bellyful is a bellyful." I found from her account, that Iſaac after I went away had ſaid but little on the ſubject of my remonſtrance. But he had thought and done ſo much the more; ſo far from ſhewing any inclination to the *Horſe-Shoe*, ſhe verily believed that he turned aſide his head as he paſſed the houſe.—She informed me that the day he brought home the half-cheeſe and was cutting a ſlice for each of the children, ſhe ſaid to him, "there look "at Jim, if he is not getting fat and cherry-cheeked, "the rogue! though he was ſo near his end a little "while ago." Iſaac ſeemed firſt pleaſed at the thought, then looked grave, and muttered "all might be well "yet, if it were not for one thing:" this he afterwards owned to her was Mrs. Pritchard's ſcore, almoſt twenty ſhillings! and "then the Doctor's bill for ſtuff;" he ſhould never be eaſy till theſe were paid, and how he ſhould ever contrive to pay them, he did not know.

This was the very way I wiſhed what I ſaid to work upon Iſaac; ſo I entertained hopes of an effectual reform. It was fortunate for him that he was

from time to time called up ſtairs to lift his maſter Simcox from the bed to his chair.——This poor man was now daily growing worſe and worſe; and at laſt became an hideous ſpectacle, quite a monſter, with his legs enormouſly ſwelled, his face bloated, and gaſping for breath; he was now in his ſickneſs as penitent, as he had been before confident in the Heyday of health and high ſpirits that drinking would never hurt him; good ſound ale, he uſed to ſay, could never hurt any man. It was your doctored waſh at public-houſes that did the miſchief. One day a dreadful fit of hard breathing having ſeized him, his daughter cried out for ſomebody to come up-ſtairs and help, for her father was dying; Iſaac was in the kitchen below, ſupping a piggin of milk-porridge. He hurried up ſtairs directly; what a ſight to behold! the ſwoln unwieldy farmer with his face as black as your hat, ſnapping for a mouthful of air; and when he was raiſed and had recovered his breath a little, repeating in a doleful tone out of the Pſalms—*My ſtrength faileth me, becauſe of my iniquity; and my bones are conſumed; My wickedneſſes are gone over my head; and are like a ſore burden, too heavy for me to bear.* He had numbers of verſes by heart, for he had been one of your conſtant church-goers, who think themſelves quit and abſolved for a bad life if they do but regularly every week cry *Amen* along with the clerk of the pariſh.

In the progreſs of Simcox's diſorder his legs burſt, and the holes at which the water oozed out, began to mortify. One Sunday afternoon as Iſaac was ſitting with him, and his daughter was dreſſing the wounds, he would look at his legs and every now and then cry

out: *My ſores ſtink and are corrupt, through my fooliſhneſs; I am brought into ſo great trouble and miſery that I go mourning all the day long;—there is no whole part in my body!* This and much more to the ſame purpoſe Iſaac reported to me; and all things taken together, you cannot wonder if theſe penitential ejaculations made a much deeper impreſſion upon him than all the ſermons he had ever heard in his life.

But to return to Sarah and the houſe. I had beforehand determined within myſelf, if I ſaw ſufficient hopes of Iſaac's amendment, to pay off the ſcore at the Horſe-Shoe, and take the debt upon myſelf. It is impoſſible to paint to you Sarah's joy and aſtoniſhment and gratitude, when I took out a guinea and a half, and bade her go and ſettle her own account and Iſaac's with Mrs. Pritchard.—I told her that I could afford to truſt as well as Mrs. Pritchard, that perhaps ſhe would rather have me for a creditor than that fair-ſpoken gentlewoman, and that Iſaac might pay me by little at a time, taking care not to put his family on ſhort allowance for this purpoſe—He has now for ſome time been out of my debt. I did not ſcruple to let him pay me for the medicines alſo. I thought he would feel better ſatisfied with himſelf and a more independant man.—You will not wonder, however, that I indulged myſelf in the pleaſure of preſenting Sarah with a piece of home-ſpun for a gown. It was eaſy for me to procure a place for each of her children as they became fit for ſervice.

Iſaac though for a long time tongue-tied upon the ſubject of his own conduct, now takes pleaſure in relating every circumſtance. And as he has a flow of

words with plenty of proverbs and country ſayings, he works it up into an intereſting ſtory.

It happened that the ſawyers, his old pot companions, whom he calls his *Comforters*, came to ſaw up another fall of Hollies, about the time that Iſaac was beginning to be a thriving man again.—The firſt day they met, after ſome very hearty ſhakes of the hand, they invited him to come to their quarters and renew old acquaintance. Iſaac thanked them kindly, but ſaid he could not poſſibly meet them that evening; it was Saturday; but if they would come to his cottage the next day towards the fall of night, he would treat them with a bit of cold meat, a diſh of warm potatoes, and a ſup of *pertiſh* beer which he had remaining after the wake. They readily accepted the invitation. After ſupper he related his adventures; and "now" ſays he, "Gentlemen," looking at them with an air of defiance, when he had told the whole ſtory, "after this you are welcome to try to 'tice me "to big Martha's, if you think yourſelves able."

I do not ſuppoſe they preſſed him much; but Iſaac was firm and not to be ſhaken from his purpoſe. He had felt too ſenſibly the difference between beggary with drunkenneſs and diſcontent, and plenty with ſobriety and a light, cheerful heart—And may every labouring-man, ſay I, who keeps his family in good plight, perſevere in well-doing, and have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing his children thrive under his eye and proſper like healthy plants; and may thoſe who have been unfortunately miſled like Iſaac, into the practice of ſotting at public houſes, take pattern by him, and

once

once more become kind huſbands and parents: You may be ſure, my good friend, that to this their wives and children will all cry—AMEN, SO BE IT—And ſo farewell for the preſent. I remain

Yours to command,

JOSIAH LANGFORD.

23 AP 57

To the REFINED READER.

A STATE is civilized in proportion to the number of its members, who have a lively ſenſe of moral obligation. The prevalence of a diſpoſition to diſcharge the good offices which one human being can render another, and to abſtain from the commiſſion of injury, ſeems an infallible criterion of national happineſs. It is, I ſuſpect, the only infallible criterion. Where ſuch a ſpirit does not prevail, the moſt flouriſhing condition of commerce and manufactures may be a ſpecious, but it will always be found an empty boaſt, and by no means to be admitted as a proof of *general* proſperity; for there the *general* condition muſt, from the inſeparable connection between cauſe and effect, be the reverſe of proſperous. Vice and want will, on a cloſe inſpection, be ſeen to render the ſituation of the labourer and his family wretched. The ſame may be ſaid of the *Fine Arts*. The moſt eminent cooks and taylors, painters, muſicians and poets have flouriſhed at periods, when the tiller of the ground and the uſeful artiſan have been very ſcantily ſupplied with the neceſſaries, and utterly deſtitute of the comforts, of life.

Poſſibly thoſe, who are not apt to feel much regard for others, may be awakened by regard for themſelves to reflection on this momentous ſubject. For it is evident from hiſtory, that unleſs the maſs of the people be trained to humanity, and in a condition to earn thoſe neceſſaries, by the want of which man is maddened into a beaſt of prey, no place or perſon can be wholly ſecure from the effects of popular fury. The moſt deſpotic power is incapable of preventing theſe civil ſtorms. Mobs are no where more outrageous than in Turkey. In the American States, on the contrary, where inſtruction to a certain degree is common, and the recompence of labour juſt, public tranquillity is never liable to internal diſturbance.

Mr. John Adams, a writer by no means inclined to exaggerate the advantages of his country, aſſures us that it is *the happineſs of the Americans ſcarcely to be able to form an idea of the claſs of men in Europe denominated the mob.*

Mankind ſeem not ſo much inſenſible to the importance of moral cultivation, as to calculate the means upon erroneous data. It is obvious that no motives, except ſuch as we intimately feel, can have any ſteady influence on our conduct. Nevertheleſs children, whoſe minds are not left wholly untutored, are taught any thing rather than the plain and practical truths of morality; or elſe theſe truths are preſented to them in a manner fitted to counteract their ſalutary effect on the underſtanding and the heart. Of courſe, it has never yet been *the happineſs of Europeans ſcarcely to be able to form an idea of the claſs denominated the mob.* Our forefathers have always had this idea kept alive in their minds; the frequent recurrence of tumultuous outrages inſures to us the ſame accuracy of conception; and as long as Society ſhall contain a large proportion of members that want nothing but the pretext and the opportunity to commit depredations, what better ſecurity will others have than their ſtupidity and diſperſion? Some incidents will, as heretofore, from time to time ſerve as the ſignal for violence; and experience authorizes us to ſuppoſe that ſuch ſignals will always be obeyed by the ſavage; whoſe movements are, beſides, ſo uncertain, that we often ſee them turned againſt the very perſons, who but a ſhort time before had been artful enough to direct them againſt others.

Thanks, however, to LOCKE and his followers, a better proſpect ſeems to be opening before us. Parents are beginning to perceive how unavailing it is to attempt to teach any thing but what is ſuited to the capacity, and comes home to the boſom of the pupil. Books, far ſuperior to thoſe formerly employed in the firſt ſtage of education, have been written

for

for the uſe of children. But as the authors have held MASTERS and MISSES for the moſt part in view, it remains to extend the ſame principle and to do the ſame good office for poor children, and indeed for the grown poor, many of whom have never had a ſingle moral idea put properly into their heads. The foregoing was intended as a ſpecimen of compoſitions for the latter purpoſe. A copious progeny of imitations and the diſperſion of above 40,000 copies in Britain, Ireland, and America within three years, beſpeak ſufficient approbation of the attempt.

THOMAS BEDDOES.

Clifton,
Auguſt 29, 1796.

23 AP 57